

Saint Paul Second Shift Youth Commission



**Year in Review
2006-2007**

Saint Paul Second Shift Youth Commission

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Second Shift

Youth Commission

Acknowledgments

Sincere appreciation goes to
the Surdna Foundation
for their generous support of
the Saint Paul Second Shift Youth Commission.

Meet the Youth Commissioners



Hester B.*

North End Neighborhood



Zuka C.

North End Neighborhood



Catrina E.

Como Park Neighborhood



Michael G.

Macalester-Groveland Neighborhood



Alexis J.*

Greater East Side Neighborhood



Willie M.

Merriam Park / Lex-Ham Neighborhood



Azucena N.*

Payne-Phalen Neighborhood



Wayne T.

Battle Creek Neighborhood



Melanie B.*

Highland Park Neighborhood



Ayana C.

Thomas-Dale / Frogtown Neighborhood



Geoffrey G.

Summit-University & Summit Hill Neighborhoods



Kalia H.*

Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood



Larissa L.

West Side Neighborhood



Sahmad N.

West 7th & Downtown Neighborhoods



Sylvia P.*

St. Anthony Park Neighborhood



Corey V.

West 7th & Downtown Neighborhoods

* Denotes contributing author to this report

Overview: The Second Shift Initiative & Youth Commission

THE SECOND SHIFT INITIATIVE

Education is core to the quality of life in our great city. Saint Paul will strive to ensure that learning opportunities are quality driven and accessible for all. Education will be at the forefront of closing the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots.” Mayor Chris Coleman has called the City to action to work the “Second Shift” by extending the learning day and providing kids a safe, positive place to be after school. The Second Shift Initiative will work in concert with its many education resources: our world class public, private and charter schools; premier colleges and universities; libraries; park and recreation centers; and a network of informal learning institutions.

The Second Shift refers to the time young people spend out of school; the non-school hours including after school and summer hours. Young people spend 20% of their time in school and 80% in the out of school time. The Second Shift Initiative identifies needs and gaps in services; gathers and disseminates information and best practices; coordinates current programs and partnerships in the effort to eliminate duplication of services; effects policy change; and informs resource allocation. The Second Shift Initiative aims to boost, enhance and help create sustainable partnerships for years to come. Over the coming years the Second Shift Initiative aims to create a “virtual one stop” website so families and young people can learn about and connect with out-of-school-time opportunities; create an East Side circulator bus system to ensure youth have transportation to out-of-school-time opportunities; launch and coordinate a citywide “Second Shift No School Day” programs at recreation centers; and to pilot a quality assessment tool.

THE SAINT PAUL SECOND SHIFT YOUTH COMMISSION

The Saint Paul Second Shift Youth Commission was formed in August of 2006 and is the formal vehicle for youth civic engagement and leadership in the City of Saint Paul. The youth commission consists of 19 high school aged youth from neighborhoods across Saint Paul. Youth commissioners provide input and direction to the Second Shift Initiative and aim to influence other public and organizational policies that impact the lives of young people. Youth Commissioners are committed to action and will organize youth to have a voice in city government.



Over the past year, the founding members of the youth commission worked hard to create a foundation for powerful youth engagement. The youth commissioners make a positive contribution to the city

and its neighborhoods. The youth commission meets monthly and rotates chairmanship of meetings to ensure all commissioners have an opportunity to lead the group. In addition to monthly business meetings, commissioners are active on various committees which are focused on specific goals and projects. This Year in Review, written by youth commissioners, highlights their work and accomplishments during the commission’s first year in action.



Second Shift

Youth Commission

This year the youth commission spent time creating a logo for our group. We did this by working with the graphic designer, John Gerber. Mr. Gerber is an artist who has made a lot of logos for different organizations and businesses over the years. We told him what the youth commission is all about and what it means to us. We gave him ideas about the types of colors and pictures that would represent this.

From our ideas, Mr. Gerber designed a couple different choices and at our monthly youth commission meetings we talked about them and decided on one that everyone liked. The Second Shift Youth Commission logo that we picked stands for a lot. I will start with the people that are on the logo. They represent the youth commissioners and other youth that help our neighborhoods. Second are the buildings that are in the background of our logo. These buildings stand for the environments and neighborhoods that we live in. These also stand for places that we help to make stronger and the places we represent. Last but not least are the moon and sun that are in the sky. The sun stands for the work that we do during the day. The moon stands for the time period that we are supposed to represent, the second shift. They call us the second shift because we work on issues that youth have after school or work is over.

The whole youth commission wants to give a big THANK YOU to John Gerber for spending so much time making a great logo – it is really perfect for us!

***The Second Shift
Youth Commission Logo***

by Melanie B.



PUBLIC WORK INSTITUTE (Azucena):

About half the youth commissioners went to the Public Work Institute that was run by the Center for Democracy and Citizenship. This day was for people to know about Minnesota Works Together which is a project to get more people to be civically involved. There were a lot of workshops the youth commissioners attended. I went to one where youth talked about violence in our communities and what we can do about it.

LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL (Azucena):

Lights on Afterschool was a national day to recognize the importance of after-school programs. I was a speaker at this event and I told everyone there why after-school programs are so important. I believe youth should be involved in them because it gives us a chance to learn something new and it cuts down on bad influences.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, HEALTHY YOUTH (Sylvia):

Hester B. and I spoke at the Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth Conference hosted by the Search Institute at the Hyatt in Minneapolis. The particular session we were part of was called "Affecting Policy and Building Good Will Through Advocacy." Hester talked mainly about the problems youth face with after-school time, and I talked about the benefits of youth involvement in the advocacy process.

YOUTH DAY AT THE CAPITOL (Alexis):

This event gave youth from around the state a chance to meet their legislators and tell them what youth care about. Catrina E. and I spoke at the noon rally on behalf of youth in Minnesota. We talked about how youth need to step up to the plate and make sure after-school programs get funding and to support other youth issues like preventing homelessness.



The Youth Commission Around Town: Conferences & Speeches

by Azucena N., Sylvia P., and Alexis J.

Junior Commissioner Events

by Hester B.

WHO ARE JUNIOR COMMISSIONERS?

Junior Commissioners are 1st – 5th graders who came to our junior commissioner events and were therefore titled junior commissioners. We thought that having junior commissioners would be a good idea because we could get first hand perspective from elementary school age kids about what they think about their neighborhood, what they like about it and what they want to make better. We also found out what younger kids do after school and what they would like to do. This information helped us because we got a sense about how these kids felt about their neighborhoods and this makes sure that what the youth commission does represents younger kids too.

JUNIOR COMMISSIONER EVENTS:

We held two junior commissioner events this year. We planned and set up a variety of games and activities that we knew would make it fun for junior commissioners to participate. These games were intended to make the kids think about their neighborhoods and what they like and don't like about it. At the Junior Commissioner Round-Up in November, the junior commissioners traced their bodies on paper and drew pictures inside about what they did and did not like about their neighborhoods. After individual sessions with groups of 4 or 5 kids, we all went into the gym at El Rio Vista Recreation Center and put all the different ideas and concerns up on the wall. We also had a junior commissioner event



at the Dayton's Bluff "No School Day" program during Spring Break. At that event, each junior commissioner decided to draw a picture either about what they liked about their neighborhood or about what they would like to change. They drew their pictures on cloth squares and then these were put together in a big collage-like quilt that can be hung on the wall.

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE JUNIOR COMMISSIONERS:

By looking at the pictures the junior commissioners drew and asking them about their pictures, we took notes about what issues the young kids care about. We learned that after-school the junior commissioners play video games, watch tv, do their homework, play outside and like to play sports. Some of the junior commissioners told us they like recreation centers because they can play sports and other stuff there. We also learned that they like having restaurants and corner stores in their neighborhood so they can get snacks. The junior commissioners' pictures showed us that there are guns, gangs and shootings in their neighborhoods. This was the number one thing that junior commissioners want to change. They do not want to hear shootings and they do not want gangs or people selling drugs. This was really good to learn from the Junior Commissioners because older youth care about this same issues.



Youth Mapping in Dayton's Bluff

by Kalia H.

MAPPING IN DAYTON'S BLUFF:

We can not map every neighborhood at once so we started with the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood. Those of us on the youth mapping committee wanted other youth in the neighborhood to get involved. We recruited youth from the Dayton's Bluff library and recreation center to help us map all the community organizations, recreation centers, schools and local churches that might provide youth programs. After we plotted all this on a map, we called and interviewed each of the organizations about their youth programs.

Next we worked with a graphic designer to make a map youth can fold and keep in their pocket. Our map idea came from one we saw in Minneapolis. On the front is a map of the neighborhood with all the youth programs marked and on the back is useful information on all the organizations. We also knew that the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood would have a Circulator Bus for the first time this summer. The bus is free for youth to ride and will go around the neighborhood, stopping at the youth programs. We decided to put the circulator route on our map too. The product of this project will benefit many youth in this city and will enhance their knowledge

of this great city and all of it's great opportunities. We look forward to doing some youth mapping in other Saint Paul neighborhoods.

THE YOUTH MAPPING COMMITTEE

The purpose of the youth mapping committee is to make sure youth in Saint Paul know what kinds of programs are open to them after school and in the summer. It is also to make sure that the programs we have in our neighborhoods are the types of things youth want to do. To do this, the youth mapping committee gathers information on all the after school and summer programs available to youth in different Saint Paul neighborhoods. All the programs collected helps us develop a map that we give to youth to inform them about these various programs that they can get involved with.



The Policy Committee: Transportation for Youth

by Sylvia P.

THE POLICY COMMITTEE

The policy committee was formed in order to engage the youth commission in civic involvement projects and so we can gain a better understanding of how to affect issues through public policy. This year, the primary focus of the policy committee was to obtain circulator bus transportation for youth in the City of Saint Paul. The first circulator bus started in the West Side neighborhood. The circulator bus goes around the neighborhood in a loop, it is free for youth to ride and it stops at all the places that have youth programs. The youth commission felt that this is an extremely important issue because lots of youth don't get involved because they have no way to get to after school and summer programs. We knew we wanted to be actively involved in what the city was doing to start circulators in other Saint Paul neighborhoods.



WHAT WE DID TO SUPPORT CIRCULATOR BUSES IN SAINT PAUL

The policy committee learned that their was proposed legislation being debated in the Minnesota State Legislature that would support circulator buses in Saint Paul. Then, two members of the policy committee, Sahmad and Kalia, testified in front of the Early Education Finance Committee in the House of Representatives. Sahmad told the committee about his experiences with the West Side circulator and how he would not have transportation to the Boys and Girls Club without it. Kalia told the Early Education Finance Committee about how the acquisition of a circulator would benefit her neighborhood of Dayton's Bluff. The bill we supported in the House of Representatives and was authored by representative John Lesch who met with some of the members of the policy committee and other people who testified in support of this legislation. In addition, we contacted other legislators and

spoke with other people involved with the circulator project. At the time this report went to print we do not know if the legislature will help us support the circulator buses, but we are hopeful! Throughout the entire experience, members of the policy subcommittee were able to have hands-on participation with the policymaking process.



Saint Paul Youth Summit

by Alexis J.

The youth commission held the first Saint Paul Youth Summit on May 11th. Those of us on the youth commission decided to have a youth summit as an opportunity to hear the concerns and opinions of other youth in Saint Paul. The summit started with an opening rally to get the youth excited about the event and Kaiser, a teen who goes to Humbolt High School created a theme song for the youth commission and performed it for the first time that night.

After that, youth went to workshops. I led a workshop called "This Ain't Yo' School's Civics Class" with Ayana C. The goal of this workshop was to teach the youth in Saint Paul to not only volunteer but to get to know their elected leaders so they can make long-term solutions and not just short term ones. We want to thank Youthrive, the Better Ballot Campaign and Yo!

The Movement for also leading workshops. All the youth commissioners were part of leading a second workshop. At this workshop the youth who came expressed the issues they most care about through discussion, games, art and poetry. Those issues were brought to the Youth Policy Convention where all the youth who came to the summit voted for the top five issues that are most important to youth in Saint Paul. These top five issues now make up our Saint Paul Youth Policy Platform. The platform states what the youth want and the

youth commission will use it as a way to organize other youth to have power and make changes on these issues. The summit closed with hip hop performances by some teens and an adult hip hop artists that were recruited by Yo! The Movement. We could identify with the songs because they were about youth standing up for themselves, their community and what they need to succeed.

By planning and having this youth summit, all the youth commissioners learned how to be more organized and how to connect with other youth. We had to step out of what we were comfortable with at our own schools and learn how to connect with other people. The event was really good for our first time and we can't wait to make it even better next year!



Saint Paul Youth Policy Platform

The Youth Policy Platform was created by youth at the Saint Paul Youth Summit on May 11th, 2007. This platform states the issues that young people want to address with adults and elected officials.

Violence in our neighborhoods and schools: Many young people witness and experience violence in their neighborhoods and schools; often this violence is caused by gang and drug activity. Every young person has the right to grow up in a neighborhood and schools that are violence free.

Policy goals:

- All young people have access to rehabilitation centers and programs that help them get out of gangs, off the streets and off drugs.
- Saint Paul has top notch programs to stop youth from joining gangs so they never end up in the juvenile justice system.
- Neighborhoods have strong community policing programs where police, youth and adults know each other.

Healthy Environments: Youth crave and deserve healthy environments. This is defined in two ways: 1) youth-friendly spaces and organizations that are comfortable and fun and where youth have power to decide activities and 2) An earth with clean water, air, and land, and protected animal habitat.

Policy goals:

- Youth have influence to create youth-friendly spaces and organizations like teen and career centers that connect them with jobs and internships.
- All organizations and families recycle and there is less litter in our neighborhoods.
- Saint Paul promotes walking, biking and public transportation to lower pollution.
- The Mississippi River is clean and nature along the riverbanks is protected.

Success in School, College Access and Tuition: Youth in Saint Paul not only want to dream about their future, they want to achieve it. College is becoming too expensive for many youth to attend and youth need better information to prepare for college. When the “achievement gap” is covered in the media or by adults, many youth feel that the accomplishments of students of color are not recognized.

Policy goals:

- There are college resource centers in the community that help youth plan for and get into college and other education programs after high school
- College tuition is affordable and more financial aid and scholarships are available.

Youth-Friendly Transportation: Youth face barriers to jobs and involvement in sports and other after-school and summer activities because they do not have a way to get there.

Policy goals:

- There is a circulator bus in every Saint Paul neighborhood.
- Youth are involved in Saint Paul’s light rail planning.
- Youth can afford public transportation and it is safe and welcoming.

Discrimination: Racism and discrimination are still barriers to a happy and healthy life in Saint Paul. Sometimes youth are viewed in negative ways by both adults and other youth because of how they look, how they dress or because of their skin color. This creates stereotypes that make it hard for young people to be seen as who they really are.

Policy goals:

- Saint Paul puts a priority on programs that address racism among youth and adults.
- Neighbors, police and youth in Saint Paul get to know each other and break down barriers.



COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Junior Commissioner Events:

Azucena N., Alexis J., Geoffrey G., Zuka C., Melanie B.,
Hester B., Ayana C., Wayne T., Willie M., Michael G.

Policy:

Kalia H., Larissa L., Alexis J., Sahmad N., Sylvia P.

Youth Summit Planning:

Hester B., Ayana C., Alexis J., Azucena N.

Youth Mapping:

Zuka C., Catrina E., Kalia H., Sylvia P.,
Wayne T., Corey V.

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Second Shift

Youth Commission

